

Labour Market News

CENTRAL ALBERTA

Alberta Employment and Immigration

JOB SEEKERS

Safety rules the oilpatch Careers in oil and gas services

Most jobs in the oil and gas sector require at least two to three days of training on safety issues before a new employee can begin working. For employers, making safety a priority just makes sense.

Without safe work practices, common tools in this industry can be deadly. To ensure a safe work environment, the industry has developed a series of courses that prepare workers for the field. Most employers will provide these courses to new staff, but anyone can take common courses like H2S Alive and First Aid through local training companies (see 'Safety Consultants and Training' in the Yellow Pages). Here is a list of some of the more common courses:

* **H2S Alive** covers the properties and hazards of hydrogen sulfide (H₂S), a deadly gas that can be found in oil or natural gas deposits. The course explains how to protect yourself from H₂S, and how to rescue others that have been exposed to H₂S. This course is extremely common in the industry, and there are very few jobs that don't require it. Having it before you look for a job may help to get your foot in the door.

* **First Aid and CPR** courses give you the skills and knowledge to care for an injury until professional medical help arrives. All employees working in the field must be trained in First Aid and CPR.

* **Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)** is the national program for dealing with hazardous materials in Canada. Every time you start a new job working with dangerous materials the employer will have to give you a WHMIS certification, so getting this certificate before looking for a job is less useful than other training.

* **Transportation of Dangerous Goods (TDG)** is much like WHMIS. It's a program for hazardous materials but it is specifically designed for the transportation of particular hazardous materials. Certification is non-transferrable between companies.

On top of these common courses, most jobs in the oil and gas sector have their own specialized safety courses, and any career in the oilpatch will include more training and more safety courses.

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EMPLOYERS

Making the most of goodbye: Exit interviews

Whether an employee leaves in anger or with a warm handshake, exit interviews can help improve retention rates for the remaining employees.

The primary aim of an exit interview is to learn the reasons for an employee's departure and then use the information to make changes for the better. "You can't keep the person who's leaving," explains Rael Kalley, president of Strategic Pathways. "But they may well have information that can help retain people who are close to leaving the company for much the same reasons. Exit interviews are like an early warning system for retention problems."

Exit interviews are always voluntary, and are best conducted by someone outside the immediate working group of the employee. HR staff, for example, commonly do exit interviews. Or, companies like Strategic Pathways can be called in to complete exit interviews, and report back to management. The trouble with getting an immediate boss to do an exit interview is the employee may not be entirely honest for fear of losing any chance of a good reference. And second, the immediate boss might be the problem, and they may not pass on relevant criticism.

For any company, large or small, exit interviews present a unique opportunity. "Employees don't often rock the boat when they are with a company, but if they are given a chance in an exit interview they can be refreshingly honest," says Kalley.

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See page 7 for a related Best Practice story.

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NEXT ISSUE...

2008 Year in Review

Hard work, and good pay

Careers oil and gas services

Careers

TO CONSIDER

Job hunters can get an excellent idea of the training available for the oil and gas industry through Enform. This national organization develops and provides training for the entire industry. Enform's Training Planning Guide 2009 provides a detailed list of the training available, explaining who needs the courses and how much it costs (visit www.enform.ca/assets/files/tpg_2009.pdf for a PDF version of the guide).

RATHOLE OPERATOR (NOC 8412)

Before a drilling rig can even begin to drill a hole the well site has to be prepared, and that involves more drilling. For most sites three holes have to be drilled by rathole operators. The largest is a pilot hole (starter hole) that goes about 13 metres down. The second and third holes are called the rathole and the mousehole. Ratholes are used by the rig to store the kelly (kellys connect to the pipe and turn it). Mouseholes are used to temporarily store sections of pipe. Rathole operators work in teams of two, the driller and the driller assistant. The driller operates the drill rig, while the assistant drives a support unit with supplies. Rathole companies prefer to hire assistants with a Class 1 driver's licence, and then train them. Once an assistant is fully trained, it can take another year before they graduate to a driller position. "We bring them along right from the start," says OK Drilling Services president Mel Kahanyshyn. "Whatever training they need, whether it's H2S tickets, or First Aid, we provide it." Winter is the busy season for rathole operators when much of the work moves to northern Alberta. Assistants can earn about \$60,000 a year, and drillers can make over \$100,000. "It's not a really difficult job," says Kahanyshyn. "But the days can be long."

HYDROVAC OPERATOR (NOC 8412)

Want to dig a hole without digging? Call a hydrovac operator. Working in teams of two, hydrovac operators and their assistants (swampers) blast dirt away using a high pressure water hose—the wand. They then suck up the debris using a powerful vacuum. "Because you're blasting dirt away, it can be a pretty messy job," explains Kelly Stewart with Big Eagle Well Services. It's also a job that offers plenty of opportunities to work close to home. "We use it a lot for pipelines," explains Stewart. "But it's also used for utilities, construction, and cable installation. There's a lot of work locally, and many of our people are home for dinner every day." Still, the oil and gas industry is a major source of work and hydrovac crews can be called out to work for weeks at a time in remote locations. Most hydrovac operators learned their job from other operators as swampers. "It usually takes about six months to get up to speed," says Stewart. For the entry-level job as a swamper most companies are looking for a Class 5 licence, and an ability to work outside. Operators have to have at least a Class 3 licence and more commonly a Class 1 licence. A swamper can earn \$50,000 a year.

DRIVERS and SWAMPERS (NOC 7471 and 7411)

Truck drivers in the oil and gas industry deliver pipe, supplies and entire rigs to sites across western Canada, but it's not like any driving you'd find on the highway. "This is hard driving over rough terrain, and you have to be able to work in adverse weather conditions," explains Dan McLellan with Withers LP. Another big difference from highway truck drivers is the crane on many oil and gas trucks. Drivers not only sit behind the wheel, they also operate the crane (picker) during loading and unloading, and in Alberta that means the driver has to be an apprentice or registered boom truck operator.

Even with the help of a crane the job of loading and unloading a truck is too big for one person and trucks often go out with a swamper. "Swampers basically assist the driver," says McLellan. "They're an extra set of eyes on the road, and help with the loads. It's a labour intensive job." At companies like Withers, swampers often pick up their Class 1 driver's licence with the help of their employer. With the Class 1 licence an entry-level swamper earning about \$60,000 a year can move into a driver position that can pay \$80,000 and more.



FRACTURING OPERATOR (NOC 8412)

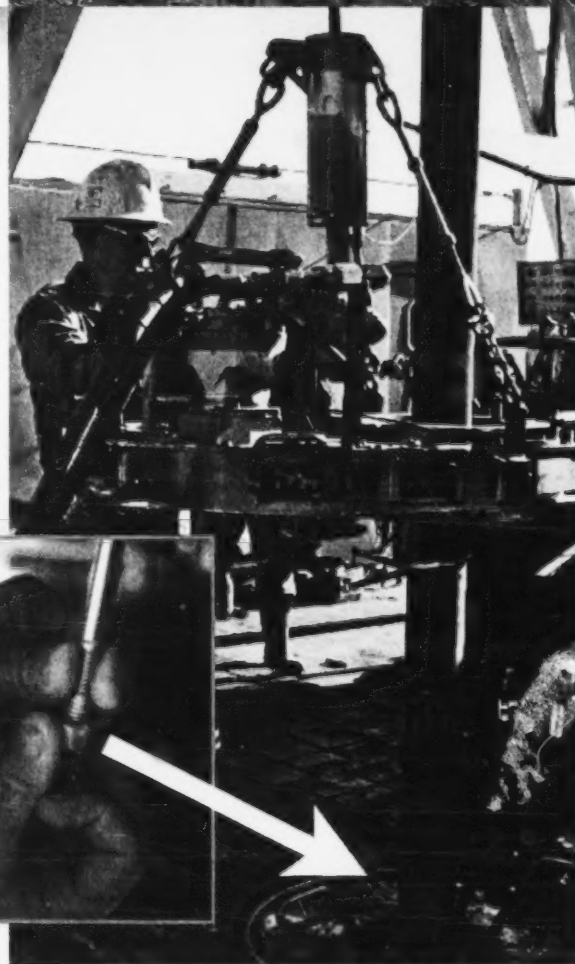
It's a blast working in fracturing (fracing), says Rodney Mykietiak, a supervisor with GasFrac. "The job is to pump fluid, sand and chemicals at high pressure down a well hole to rip open a previously opened vein into oil or gas deposits and let more of the oil or gas back up." Fracing is a fairly new technology. It's also a popular technology. "Companies can go back to an old well and get a second life out of it," says Mykietiak. "It saves money." Unlike many jobs in oil and gas services, fracing crews always work in daylight hours, are not very seasonal, stay one day at a well site and operate in large teams of over a dozen people. "Our work times are shorter, but we work hard," says Mykietiak. Operating from large trucks, frac companies are looking for people with a Class 1 driver's licence for the entry-level assistant operator position. For the remaining necessary skills, companies usually train workers. "We train front to back," says Mykietiak. "I never saw a frac truck until I started 15 years ago. I learned everything I know in the field." As a new worker gains experience they will move to more demanding positions. "If you have some mechanical background we can give you a career of 25 years," says Mykietiak. An entry-level position may pay about \$60,000.

POWER TONG OPERATOR (NOC 8412)

Shawn Hatala, a power tong operator with Mad Kat Power Tong Inc., pulls out a nut and bolt from the tool box to help explain what a power tong operator does (see right). "What you're doing is screwing a 13-metre long section of pipe (casing) into another section of pipe that's in the ground." To think of it another way, it's like trying to screw one giant steel straw into another. Once one section of casing has been screwed into another, the string of casings is pushed further down the well hole and the process starts all over. (Casing is installed once the well has been drilled. The metal tube keeps out debris, and lets the resources flow back up the well.)

The main tool for the job is the power tong (see right) which grips the casing and spins it, screwing it into place on the drilling rig floor—sounds simple, but it isn't. "You have to have a feel for the pipe," explains Hatala. "You have to know when you're stripping the thread. And you have to be able to imagine what's going on at the bottom of the hole."

Power tong operators are experienced specialists, and employees at companies like Mad Kat usually have spent years on exploration or service rigs before they learn how to use a power tong. There are no specialized courses for this job. Instead, power tong operators learn their job from other operators in a close-knit community of small companies. "We have at least three companies here in Rimbey," says Hatala. "We all try and help each other out." Working as a power tong operator is physical and demanding work. Work days can begin in the morning but can last well into the night, and a power tong operator can get a call at anytime. "When you're on call, your phone is on 24 hours a day. You can get a call at 1:30 a.m., 3:30 a.m. or 12 noon," says Hatala. For more on power tong operators see page 4.



WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A ...

Power tong operator

How did you start in this career?

Basically, I've been in the oilpatch all my life. I got out of high school, spent five years in the military and as soon as I came back to Alberta, I went back into the oilpatch. I started out working service rigs, then drilling rigs, then went into safety and fire, and then went into power tong.

What do you enjoy about your job?

In my position, I've got the most beautiful view out of my office window [his truck] anyone could hope to ever have. It changes every minute. And I get to work with some of the best people you've ever met. The boys I work with on the drilling rig are some of the nicest, most decent down-to-earth people in with world. Everyone's different, the job never really changes, it's the people that you work with that change and it's fantastic. And the money's great. When I got my first cheque, I made more in 15 days than I made in three months when I was in the military.

What are your career goals?

My career goals right now are to grow this company as large as it possibly can. I want to take it international, which we're in the process of doing. I want to make this one of the best service companies out there. We've got a fantastic team of people—this company is not one person, it's everyone, from salespeople down to our bookkeeper. And our safety record's second-to-none. We believe in our guys having time off, and making sure everyone's happy, rested and the job goes properly. We've been running four years now and we haven't had an injury other than a couple of pinched fingers. If we can make it a little better and a little safer by doing things properly instead of cutting corners it will save lives and save people.

Does your job affect your lifestyle?

This is a really different way of life. You've got to be prepared to be on call



24-hours a day, seven days a week, and free to work as many days of the year as you can get. It's long hours, it's lots of fun.

What advice would you give to someone looking at this career?

If you like doing something like this, the best advice is to start on a service rig—go talk to a few of the companies. They have beautiful training programs. What we look for are people that have an aptitude for running this stuff. You can train someone up for this job so they can do it, but it takes a lot of downhole knowledge and experience to do it well—you have to have a feel for what's going on hundreds of metres underground. To get started you should work the rigs at least for a while—it used to be back in the old days, you'd never see anything less than a driller working on power tong. With the manpower shortages it has changed a whole bunch. We've lost a lot of our experienced people overseas, and the patch is now re-training a whole new group of people.

CAREER PROFILE

Darrel Dous

Nearly all power tong operators have experience on the rigs before they start working with power tongs, and Dous is no exception. Through on-the-job training and courses he took on his own initiative, Dous built up the skills he needed to specialize in power tongs. "I have as much education and experience as any driller (drillers are one of the highest ranking workers on a drilling rig, second only to the rig manager)," says Dous. "I've got just about every ticket available. It's always a constant learning experience. Things change every day, and if you can get a course that puts you a little bit more on top of the game, it's worth taking." After 17 years in the industry, Dous joined Mad Kat Power Tong Inc. as a partner in the business, and as its operations manager.

Working as a POWER TONG OPERATOR (NOC 8412)

Wages

Power tong operators are experienced workers in the oil and gas sector. Their pay is high (\$100,000 a year and more), but how they are paid can vary. Some companies pay by the day (\$250 to \$1,000 a day). They may get a base salary, plus a percentage of each job (about 25 per cent), or they may only get paid a percentage of the job, such as 30 to 35 per cent (the average wage paid to a power tong operator this way is about \$2,500 per job).

Hiring tips

Power tong positions are advertised in newspapers and on Internet sites like the Job Bank (www.jobbank.gc.ca) or Workopolis.com, but if you have experience on rigs and all your safety tickets, don't hesitate to contact power tong operators directly either by phone or by sending a resumé by email.

No fear...asking about safety

In an interview, or on the first day, it's OK to ask

WORKPLACE TIPS

work it out

It's half way through a job interview. You're happy. The pay is great, and the job fits your skills and plans, but something still worries you...safety.

Perhaps you know a friend missing a few fingers from a workplace accident, or you may have seen some of the workplace safety ads from Work Safe Alberta (www.bloodylucky.ca). Either way, you'd like to know if the job is simply too dangerous at any pay. But should you ask about safety in the workplace? Or, will the employer take it badly and go with someone else? The answer is simple. Ask.

Most employers are true believers when it comes to safety. They want safe employees. Unsafe work environments are costly, take a lot more paperwork to run and most employers really do care about their employees. If you ask about safety at the interview, employers will likely be impressed instead of insulted. But what to ask?

Here are 10 examples of questions you can ask at the interview or on the job:

1. What are the hazards of my job?
2. Are there any other hazards I should know about?
3. Will I receive job training?
4. Do you have health and safety meetings?
5. Is there protective equipment I'll be expected to wear? Will I receive training in how to use it? When?
6. Will I be trained in emergency procedures, for example, fire or chemical spills? When?
7. Where are the fire extinguishers, first aid kits and other emergency equipment located?
8. What do I do if I get hurt? Who is the first aid person?
9. What are my health and safety responsibilities?
10. Who do I ask if I have a health or safety question?

Whatever else, don't be afraid to ask some clear questions about safety. "You're actually saving employers from a lot of different expenses and problems," says Chris Chodan, a spokesperson with Alberta Employment and Immigration. "You're probably saving them a pile of money by preventing an injury or accident."

Once you do get the job, being up front still makes sense.

Saying 'NO' on the job

In Alberta, employers have a legal responsibility to ensure a safe workplace with adequate training. They are mainly responsible for workplace safety. But employees have responsibilities as well. It's actually a requirement under the Occupational Safety Act for employees to refuse to do unsafe tasks, and workers are protected if they refuse. But most safety issues can be resolved much earlier.

If you are worried about a task that seems unsafe, ask the advice of a trusted co-worker and then try to work things out with your direct supervisor.

Starting off with a respectful and positive approach works well. "I really want to make sure I do this job right. What should I know about doing it safely?" might be a good question. Or, "I'd like to do this job but I think it could be dangerous. What do you think?" is another approach.

Most often supervisors are interested and will train you, or make the changes needed for a safe work environment.

Another route to forcing a reluctant employer to change is to report them anonymously to the Workplace Health and Safety Contact Centre at 1-866-415-8690, or through the website at www.worksafely.org.

But if you still don't think it's safe, stop. Stay calm, be respectful, and refuse to do an unsafe task. It sounds drastic, but trust your instincts. If your gut says something is unsafe there is probably a reason. Remember, employees have the right to say 'no.' "If you have an employer that takes retaliatory action against you, that goes to the top of our list that we investigate," says Chodan.

More importantly, no job is worth an injury that will linger for a lifetime, or even cut short a life—your life. "Quitting is not a bad idea if all else fails," says Chodan.

'X-TREME SAFETY' IS A CLEAR EASY-TO-READ BOOKLET ON SAFETY FOR NEW AND YOUNG WORKERS.

IT HAS ADVICE AND INFORMATION, AND BEST OF ALL REAL STORIES OF WORKING MEN AND WOMEN FACED WITH SAFETY ISSUES.

WWW.ALIS.GOV.AB.CA/PDF/CSHOP/XTREMESAFETY.PDF

COMING EVENTS IN CENTRAL ALBERTA

EMPLOYER SYMPOSIUM

Employers are potentially struggling with having up to 4 generations within the work site. Explore the challenges of how the generation gap has changed the look and dynamics of the workplace and what strategies to use at this free symposium. Author Barbara Jaworski explains why businesses should be paying attention to demographics, why workforce strategies need to be rethought and why action should be taken now. And Kristen Cumming presents an engaging and humorous session that will focus on the Gen X/Y group, addressing some negative characteristics that we hear through media regarding this group (no loyalty, need lots of stimuli, etc) and refocus on the many positive and unique characteristics, traits and abilities that this group brings to the workplace.

Date: Monday, January 26, 2009

Place: North Hill Inn

Time: 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (lunch included)

To register e-mail Marilyn.Lloyd@gov.ab.ca

INDUSTRY NETWORKS LUNCHEON SERIES

Employment standards are the subject of the next luncheon in this series designed to help employers cope with their labour challenges.

Date: Tuesday, February 17, 2009

Place: North Hill Inn

Time: 11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. (lunch included)

To register e-mail Marilyn.Lloyd@gov.ab.ca

Job Bank



10 TOP JOBS

Jobs posted November 1 to 30, 2008, Red Deer Region

Red Deer Region includes Carstairs, Didsbury, Olds, Innisfail, Red Deer, Sylvan Lake, Stettler, Wetaskiwin, Ponoka, Lacombe, Rocky Mountain House, Caroline and Rimbey as well as rural areas and smaller towns around those.

OCCUPATION TITLE AND NOC CODE	NUMBER OF VACANCIES	AVERAGE WAGE
Total job ads in November	1,326	\$16.80
Food Counter Attendants, Kitchen Helpers and Related Occupations (6641)	55	\$10.95
Retail Salespersons and Sales Clerks (6421)	54	\$12.53
Food and Beverage Servers (6453)	51	\$9.69
Truck Drivers (7411)	45	\$24.72
Welders and Related Machine Operators (7265)	44	\$19.92
Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanics (7312)	41	\$32.79
Ambulance Attendants & Other Paramedical Services (3234)	39	N/A
Light Duty Cleaners (6661)	38	\$11.10
Automotive Service Technicians, Truck Mechanics & mechanical Repairers (7321)	36	\$25.73
Labourers in Food, Beverage & Tobacco Processing (9617)	36	\$12.94

Source: Service Canada, Canada-Alberta Job Order Bank Services

N/A (Not available) means five or fewer companies posted wages for this occupation.

FEATURED JOB

Welders (NOC 7265)

Welders often work in manufacturing plants, in the oil and gas industry and in construction. Using an electrical or gas torch, welders join metal together using extreme heat. The process requires a lot of knowledge and quite a lot of skill.

To become a fully qualified welder (journeyperson) in Alberta requires about three years of on-the-job training mixed with classroom courses under Alberta's apprenticeship system (visit the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training website at: www.tradesecrets.org). While working and learning under this system, an apprentice earns a portion of the wages of a journeyperson. For many, this is an ideal way to earn and learn at the same time.

In November there were 44 positions advertised for welders in Central Alberta on the Job Bank. Pay for welders is usually fairly high and in November the posted salaries averaged \$19.92 per hour. Experienced welders may advance to positions such as welding inspector, welding foreman or supervisor or plant supervisor. Some open their own repair shops, or work as portable rig welders who contract out their services.

How to use the JobBank

JOB SEEKERS

Internet job boards like the Job Bank (www.jobbank.gc.ca) are powerful tools. With a few clicks, a job hunter can search any region of Canada for a particular job category, and even search for employers who've posted ads in the past. Job Bank also has advice on writing a resumé, tips for the job search, advice for finding unadvertised positions, information on self-employment, and notes on finding work in non-profit organizations. With computers and the Internet, job hunters can even automate parts of their job hunt.

With **Job Alert**, any job that matches one of three possible profiles will be automatically emailed to users.

Job Match allows a user to create profiles that will be automatically shown to employers searching for new workers

See page 9 for other job boards and more resources for employees.

Meet employers in person: Connections

Once a week Red Deer's Labour Market Information Centre hosts Employer Connections where a single employer will be available to sit down and explain their labour needs. It's an opportunity for job seekers to speak directly with the people who can best explain a job and a career. Find out about upcoming Employer Connections at employment.alberta.ca/ central where there are links to two-page summaries of employers' presentations.

This website also has useful information on upcoming job fairs and events, links to previous editions of the Labour Market News, and links to Finding Work In ..., a monthly publication giving practical advice about finding work in different industries.

EMPLOYERS

For employers, the Job Bank offers a simple and free way of posting job ads right across the country, while the website's **Job Match** function allows employers to immediately search a database of resumé. The site also has hundreds of well organized links and articles that explain every stage in the hiring process. To post a job ad visit www.jobbank.gc.ca.

Top 10 career employment ads by industry (Red Deer Region, November 1-30, 2008)

Accommodation and food NAICS 72	247
Retail NAICS 44-45	189
Administration NAICS 56	158
Mining, oil and gas NAICS 21	148
Manufacturing NAICS 31-33	124
Health care NAICS 62	97
Logistics NAICS 48-49	84
Construction NAICS 23	83
Other services NAICS 81	61
Professional NAICS 54	17

Exit interviews that work

The City of Red Deer

**Best
Practice**
FOR EMPLOYERS



Whether an employee leaves for other opportunities, retires, is fired, or quits in a fury, the City of Red Deer offers them a chance to have one last say before they leave. This opportunity is an exit interview.

"Exit interviews give us some excellent information about why people are leaving, what they like about working here, and what we can improve," explains Carol Dyck, human resource consultant with the City of Red Deer. "It gives us a chance to see how to retain the rest of the employees."

For Dyck, and the City, exit interviews are an opportunity to look inside a department. "You can't necessarily tell from the outside looking in," says Dyck. "This is a formal way to find out what people think. Sometimes things like favouritism can come out of an exit interview—especially if we've had two or three interviews from one department with the same story. Then I really have to ask, 'what's going on?'"

Like most organizations, the City of Red Deer tends to have exit interviews conducted by managers other than the employee's direct boss. "Some managers do them themselves," says Dyck. "I just don't think it's as effective. I

don't think people are as honest or frank—no one wants to burn any bridges."

Another tool to help employees speak openly is a degree of anonymity. "Confidentiality is a huge aspect of an exit interview," says Dyck. "There was one department where I had three resignations in a year. I thought that was bit high, so I wanted to find out what was different and why they were leaving. And so what I told them was I would take their information confidentially and combine all three answers into one report, so no one would know who said what."

Many employers wince at the idea of doing exit interviews, but Dyck argues it's not all bad. "Exit interviews can be emotionally tense, especially if it's a firing situation—there's always lots of opportunity to blame somebody else for what happened. But overall, people are quite happy if you give them an opportunity to have their say and express what they liked and didn't like about working here."

While exit interviews can give managers a heads up when it comes to retention issues, solving the problem is a necessary part of the process. "If exit interviews identify red tape, inadequate training for growth, or low compensation, we can address that," says Dyck. "One department told me they didn't have the right tools they needed. They wanted to do their jobs, but they just couldn't. If we can learn these things and share them with the people that are left, that really helps."

Real solutions to workplace problems is the ultimate goal of exit interviews, but Dyck sees other benefits, including finding better matches for jobs. "Another thing we ask people is 'what would you suggest we look for in an employee?' Sometimes when we hire we're not hiring the right people for the job. Exit interviews can help fine tune our job descriptions." They may even pave the way for an employee to return some day.

"I always ask if they are interested in returning to the City of Red Deer, and if so what would have to change for them to come back," says Dyck. "You always want them to leave thinking, 'even if my experience wasn't ideal, if things did change, yes, I would come back.'"

For Dyck, every exit interview is an opportunity to improve the City of Red Deer's work environment. "There's always a gem or jewel you can get out of each one of them."

One last question...

There are a number of websites that can help an employer prepare a list of questions for an exit interview (www.businessballs.com/exitinterviews is a good example). In emotional cases, it's often helpful to stay focused on particulars and not get dragged into a standoff. And if the employee has been a valued member of the team don't hesitate to make that clear. It's also important to be prepared, and find a comfortable quiet place to conduct the interview. Ideally, an employee walks out the door with a better impression of the employer, and may even forward a few resumés back to the employer.

Sample questionnaire

- ☒ What is your main reason for leaving?
- ☒ Would you work for this employer again?
- ☒ Would you recommend this employer to friends or family?
- ☒ What did you enjoy or dislike about your job?
- ☒ What improvements would you suggest about your job/working conditions/management support?
- ☒ What do you think it takes to succeed at this company?
- ☒ What does your new employer offer different to this company?
- ☒ Any other comments?

EMPLOYERS

Exit interviews

Continued from page 1

In spite of the rewards, even large companies often fail to offer exit interviews to departing employees. "Everyone is busy," says Kalley. "HR staff come in to work, put out six fires, and by the end of the day, there's no time left. It's too bad, because if there's a problem, it's never identified, and never fixed."

For all their worth, exit interviews are still only a look in the rear view mirror. "You have to look at this like a post mortem," says Kalley. "All an exit interview can tell you is how to keep the others, and that has to be part of a broader plan."

Of all the complaints Kalley hears from disgruntled ex-employees, and even from satisfied workers, the single dominant theme that emerges is lack of feedback. "People don't leave because of money. They leave because they're not appreciated, or they only hear from management when something goes wrong. Someone once said 'Do 100 things right and no one says a word. Do one thing wrong and you get to meet the whole management team.' Unfortunately, that's true for a lot of employees."

Ongoing communication with employees through performance reviews (see the October edition of Labour Market News), and simply talking to workers, can often reveal

some of the same information as an exit interview. Sometimes it doesn't.

Intimidation still exists in the workplace, and employees may not feel comfortable talking about it until they are well clear of the employer. "Exit interviews can reveal some really troubling practices," says Kalley. "You shake your head and think, 'It's 2008, how can this be happening?'" And if someone is leaving because of serious issues, it probably means the problem has lingered. "People don't leave because of one incident. It's usually an accumulation of incidents."

In his time, Kalley has heard some frightening stories from disgruntled employees, and some extremely positive stories, but he puts it all into perspective. "We always tell our client that exit interviews are one-sided story: the employee's story. The company has its own story."

Exit interviews are unique opportunities to peer into the inner workings of a company or department, but they are just another report collecting dust if employers don't act. "With some clients, I hear the same complaints, and the same stories over and over again," says Kalley. "You have to wonder if anyone looks at these reports." For employers that do act, the stories change, and hopefully, there are fewer exit interviews for Kalley to summarize.

FOR A BEST PRACTICE STORY ON THE CITY OF RED DEER'S EXIT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS, PLUS SOME SAMPLE QUESTIONS, SEE PAGE 7.

Resources

Both federal and provincial governments have practical programs to help meet the current need for workers in this tight labour market. Here are a few programs that can be of assistance to business.

Information sources

The Labour Market Information page on the Alberta Employment and Immigration (E&I) website offers links to labour force statistics, forecasts, and wage and salary information. (employment.alberta.ca/lmi)

- The Central Alberta Economic Partnership (CAEP) website (www.centralalberta.ab.ca) has hundreds of links to information sources, and programs, including:
- Support for Training Workers
- Wage Subsidy Programs
- Recruiting Employees
- Employment Services in Central Alberta
- Foreign Worker Employer Guide

Seminars and networking

Employer Connections are held every Wednesday at the Labour Market Information Centre, 2nd Floor, First Red Deer Place, 4911-51 St. (across from the Provincial Building).

The meetings are an opportunity to meet job seekers, employment agencies and career counsellors.

Each week a single employer is showcased and presents their perspective.

To participate free of charge call 403-340-4342 and ask for a Business and Industry Liaison.

Labour solutions

- Red Deer Aboriginal Employment Services.
Ph. 403-358-7734
- Career Assistance Network teams unemployed workers with employers.
Ph. 403-341-7811
- Employment Placement Support Services supports adults over 25, and persons with disabilities age 18 and over.
Ph. 403-343-6249
- Employment Access offers employment programs for clients with disabilities.
Ph. 403-341-2363
- DRES provides support and assistance to employers hiring people with disabilities. Contact the Canada-Alberta Service Centre in Red Deer.
Ph. 403-340-5353

Personalized help when needed

There are dozens of programs available to employers. E&I employees will visit the workplace and provide a summary of options and opportunities.

For example, they can direct managers to initiatives that will help their business.

For more information call 403-340-4342 and ask for a Business and Industry Liaison.

Sign up free: We're live and online

In the News, an electronic digest about regional business expansions, relocations and closures, and Finding Work In, which profiles different career opportunities, are available online at employment.alberta.ca/central.

A free subscription service will notify you by e-mail when the latest edition of each product comes out.

On the same web page there are Labour Market News products for Stettler, Wetaskiwin, Vermillion and Wainwright.

JOB SEEKER Resources

There are many resources in the central region that can be helpful to job seekers and workers alike.

Where to find us

In the News, an electronic digest about regional business expansions, relocations and closures, and Finding Work In, which profiles different career opportunities, are available online at employment.alberta.ca/central.

A free subscription service will notify you by e-mail when the latest edition of each product comes out.

Job search and career websites

- www.jobbank.gc.ca (Job listings, links and other services)
- www.alis.gov.ab.ca (Alberta Learning Information Service)
- www.workopolis.ca (Job listings)
- www.monster.ca (Job listings)
- www.nextsteps.org (Job resources for youth)
- www.albertajobs.com (Job listings)
- www.hgcareers.com (Job listings)
- www.healthjobs.ab.ca (Health care job listings)

Job search and career information by phone

Alberta Career Information Hotline:

1-800-661-3753

Fax: 780-422-0372 TDD: 780-422-5283

Resumé review service

The Government of Alberta e-Resumé Review Service is a great way to have a resumé reviewed and improved, before sending it to employers.

To access the service, log on to www.alis.gov.ab.ca/hotline/resume and follow the instructions to send your resumé for review.

The service is free to residents of Alberta and those seeking work in Alberta.

Resources for labour market information

These websites offer a wealth of labour market information on Alberta and specific communities.

- employment.alberta.ca/lmi (Alberta Employment and Immigration)
- www.alis.gov.ab.ca (Alberta Learning Information Service)
- www.albertafirst.com (Business and economic information)
- www.centralalberta.ab.ca (Central Alberta Economic Partnership)

- www.alis.gov.ab.ca/employment/lmi/alberta.asp (Labour market information across Alberta)
- www.labourmarketinformation.ca (Service Canada)

Seminars and networking

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The meetings are an opportunity to meet employers face to face.

New to Town?

Past issues of Labour Market News featured information for communities in Central Alberta.

See past bulletins for employment, social services, health care, transportation and other great resources available in your community.

CITY / TOWN	MONTH
Camrose	July 2007
Didsbury	October 2007
Drayton Valley	June 2007
Innisfail	September 2007
Lacombe	August 2007
Olds	February 2007
Ponoka	November 2007
Red Deer	January 2007
Rocky Mountain House	April 2007
Stettler	March 2007
Sylvan Lake	December 2007
Wetaskiwin	May 2007



LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION CENTRES

Labour Market Information Centres (LMICs) provide information to help you make career, learning and work decisions. LMICs have books, magazines, newspapers, software and videos about employment-related topics.

There are LMICs across Alberta. For a complete list, see: employment.alberta.ca/lmic.

LMICs in Central Alberta:

Camrose Alberta Service Centre

3rd Flr., Gemini Centre, 6708 - 48 Ave.
Ph. 780-608-2525

Drayton Valley Sub-Office

2nd Floor Provincial Building
5136 - 51 Ave. Ph. 780-542-3134

Olds Alberta Service Centre

4905 - 50 Ave. Ph. 403-507-8060

Red Deer Canada-Alberta Service Centre

2nd Floor First Red Deer Place, 4911 - 51 St.
Ph. 403-340-5353

Rocky Mountain House Alberta Service Centre, 4919 - 51 St. Ph. 403-845-8590

Stettler Alberta Service Centre
4835 - 50 St. Ph. 403-742-7586

Wetaskiwin Alberta Service Centre
1st Floor Macadil Building
5201 - 51 Ave. Ph. 780-361 1272

Lloydminster LMIC
5016 - 48 St. Ph. 780-871-6445

Wainwright LMIC
810 - 14 Ave. Ph. 780-842-7500

Vermilion LMIC
4701 - 52 St. Ph. 780-853-8164

